

LETTER ORDER NO.
RE-LO-99-71

5 MAR 1971

Mr. L.F. Roush
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Office of Operating Programs
Public Buildings Service
General Services Administration
Washington, D.C. 20407

Dear Mr. Roush:

For the past five years this Agency and the General Services Administration (GSA) have attempted to compel the owner of the Magazine Building, 1815 North Lynn Street, Arlington, Virginia, to correct basic deficiencies in the heating and air-conditioning system in that building.

This problem was first brought to light and documented in June 1966. Since that time, letters have been exchanged between Public Buildings Service, Region 3, and this Agency. Numerous meetings have been held, and professional advice has been sought from both within and without the Government.

The owner of the building has repeatedly given assurance that corrective steps will be taken. Yet, as we approach another heating/air-conditioning transition period, we can expect extensive and severe temperature problems. (Daily temperature ranges of 20° and daily highs of 90° have not been uncommon over large areas of the south and west sides of the building.)

We are familiar with the "hothouse effect" that prevails in many office buildings when the sun shines through large areas of window glass. This condition is present in most of the newer office buildings and can usually be minimized to an extent that affords reasonable

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comfort. However, in the case of the Magazine Building, the temperature conditions are extreme and result in part from deficiencies in the design of the building's heating and air-conditioning system. It is the opinion of qualified engineers that these deficiencies cannot be corrected without an extensive and costly redesign of the existing system.

In addition to the foregoing, a noise problem has existed which the owner also appears to be unable or unwilling to solve. Vibrations originate in the exterior air-conditioning unit and produce noise which emanates essentially from the air handling equipment. The resulting noise level on the 10th floor is unacceptably high and adversely affects efficiency and morale of the personnel affected. At least one office is unusable, and the Agency currently has one medical case directly attributed to this problem. This matter has been discussed with Mr. John R. Comulada, Buildings Manager, Rosslyn Field Office, who has initiated action with the owner; however, no noticeable improvement has been obtained. As a last resort, we have retained the services of the acoustical consultants, Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc., who have made certain recommendations for corrective action. These recommendations are contained in the enclosed report (Enclosure 1) and include reduction of duct turbulence, fan noise, and fan vibration.

Additionally, leaks in the combustion chambers of the penthouse boilers cause greasy soot and acrid fumes to permeate the mechanical equipment area. This pollution is introduced through the air-conditioning system to the office spaces on the floors below. Obviously, this condition must be rectified.

Although the rental rate for this building is the highest of the three occupied by this Agency in the Rosslyn area, the facilities are the poorest. The problems are a direct result of design deficiencies and substandard maintenance. The enclosed copy of a memorandum (Enclosure 2) recently sent to Mr. Comulada further amplifies the generally poor maintenance at the Magazine Building.

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Any one of the above problems would be cause for concern; when taken in total and considering that similar problems date back five years, we are very pessimistic that a satisfactory solution can be obtained. It is our judgment that the best interest of the Agency and the Government would be served if GSA would negotiate an early termination of the present lease and fund the complete cost of relocation of the Agency at the earliest practicable date.

It is requested that GSA review this case and advise the Agency of its position. The Agency is prepared to provide whatever additional data are required.

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Director of Logistics

2 Enclosures

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